

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was without doubt one of the most gifted composers who has ever lived. His numerous compositions reveal a genius for both harmony and melody, paired with an unsurpassed sensitivity. It is unknown when Mozart composed his Sonata in F Major, K.332. Many believed its creation to be in 1778, but others now estimate a significantly later date in 1783 or 1784, which would be less than a decade before his death in 1791. This Sonata uses a typical three-movement form, with the first and third movements in the home key of F Major and the second movement in B-Flat Major. The warm, melodious character of the first movement gives way to a softer, even more lyrical spirit in the second movement, and the sonata concludes with a bright, vigorous third movement.

Johann Sebastian Bach is rightly regarded as the premier composer of the Baroque Period. Out of his vast oeuvre, his fugal keyboard music stands out due to Bach's great skill as a keyboardist and his unparalleled mastery of intertwining themes. His Prelude and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 855, is from the first book of *Das Wohltemperierte Clavier* ("The Well-Tempered Clavier"). Like all the Preludes and Fugues, the D Minor, BWV 855, was not designated for a specific Baroque keyboard instrument (clavichord, harpsichord, etc.), and yet aspects such as the sustained notes in the fugue correlate with the capabilities of the organ. The resonance, range, and pedals of the modern piano enable the nimble intensity of this prelude and the timeless awe of the fugue to shine forth.

Along with Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven was one of the greatest composers of the Classical Period. Beethoven's compositional style changed significantly over the early, middle, and late periods of his career. Although its opus number of 51 corresponds with the middle of his career, Beethoven composed the C Major Rondo in his mid-twenties, during his early period. The free and graceful, even Mozart-esque character of this rondo fits with the lighter nature of Beethoven's early compositional style, in contrast with the more innovative and serious works from his later years. The main theme of the rondo is stated four times; each statement of the theme is separated by a distinct section, each in a different character from the original theme. The non-thematic section in G Major wanders from the original character and hints at a coming intensity, the stormy C Minor section leads to a statement of the theme in the deceptive key of A-flat Major, and the following section returns to C Minor only to lead back to the original key of C Major for the final statement of the theme which is crowned with a coda.

Debussy was one of the defining composers of the Impressionistic Period. His music was like nothing heard before in the Western tradition and drew from both non-Western and Western influences. The lovely Arabesque No.1 is the first of a pair of arabesques which Debussy composed in 1888. From the very beginning of the piece, it displays a beautiful cooperation between the two hands. The recurring melody rolls from hand to hand, and as other themes are introduced, both hands are in a graceful dialogue. Even though this piece

contains sections of full, solid chords and some tension, the flowing, glistening spirit of this piece is never lost.

Despite his short life, Schubert composed a vast number of exquisite pieces. In his last two years, even as his health failed, Schubert's output increased, and the Impromptu in B-flat Major, D.935, is part of this final compositional surge. This impromptu consists of a theme succeeded by five variations. Each of the variations displays its own character. Variation I presents the theme in a flowing, heavenly form. Variation II is a playful movement with a syncopated, waltz-like accompaniment. The tense, dolorous character of Variation III is the farthest from the character of the original theme, but Variation IV immediately returns from the darkness of Variation III to an affectionate, yet sometimes subdued character. The final variation is brilliant and delicate, featuring rapid runs above an accompaniment much like that of Variation II, and the impromptu closes with a slow, virtuosic restatement of the theme.

Frederic Chopin's music has captivated countless listeners and impacted many other composers. Chopin composed almost exclusively for the piano, exhibiting a virtuosic beauty and harmonic innovation which place him as a favorite composer of many pianists. Chopin's Fantasie Impromptu in C-sharp minor is one of his most famous works. Even though it was written before his other impromptus, it was not published until several years after his death, over twenty years after its completion. Some speculate that Chopin withheld it from publication because he was concerned over its similarity to a work of Moscheles, while others believe he did not publish it because it was composed exclusively for the wealthy Baroness d'Este, daughter of the Duke of Sussex. The piece is in three sections, with similar opening and closing sections of rapid, intense figures separated by a slower, melodious middle section.

Although Chopin was born in Poland and lived most of his adult life in France, he wrote the beautiful "Raindrop" Prelude in D-flat Major during the winter of 1838-39 in Mallorca, Spain. While the Mallorca climate was intended to improve Chopin's fragile health, the weather was quite inclement during his stay, and throughout the "Raindrop" Prelude there is a repeated, raindrop-like A-flat which is maintained throughout the entire piece. In this prelude, Chopin presents contrasting sections of elegant melody and dark bass figures, all while sustaining the repeated A-flat tone.

Like the Fantasie Impromptu, the Nocturne in C minor from opus 48 is presented in three sections. The leisurely opening section showcases a simple, poignant melody over beautiful, open chords. The middle section slows even further, presents full major chords, and gradually increases in intensity to an immense climax of rapid octaves in both hands. The final section reiterates the original melody, but does so with a tense, triplet accompaniment. The heartrending beauty of the melody from the first section is bolstered by the added intensity in the third section, culminating in a finale which is both turbulent and delicate.